

White Paper: Artificial Intelligence Ethics in Communications

The following outlines the safe and ethical use of generative AI content and operational AI functions for School of Education staff responsible for communicating with external audiences, including via stories, social media, grants, and reports.

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1. First, Some Definitions

- Generative AI: Artificial intelligence that creates (seemingly) original content such as text, chat (through chatbots), images, videos, audio, or software code, in response to user “prompts” using a Large Language Model (LLM).
- Operational AI: AI often embedded in business tools and software that can aid calculation and other processes, automate tasks, and offer data-driven decision making.
- Large Language Model (LLM): A type of machine learning model “trained” on vast datasets of language, images, etc. to make predictions that enable it to generate content and perform operational tasks. *Bottom line: AI doesn’t independently “think” so much as “guess” based on the data it has learned from.*
- Hallucinations: when a generative AI system produces answers or content that is false, misleading, or entirely invented, but maintains a high degree of “confidence” in its accuracy.
- Native file/native content: Original content provided to AI by the user to summarize, analyze, etc. (as opposed to content generated solely by AI from a user prompt).

2. The Safe Use of AI in Communications

- *AI content is the responsibility of the user.* You should always treat AI as a tool that assists you rather than something that does your job/replaces you. AI is like an intern, whose work must always be reviewed before publication.
- *Do not take any content, answers, facts, or data provided by an AI system at face value.* Because AI can a) produce hallucinations/invent facts, b) reiterate biases,

and c) reproduce copyrighted material as “original,” all AI content must be *edited, fact-checked, and reviewed* by a human before publication.

- *Every AI tool can produce hallucinations*, even when using a single native file as its source (i.e., summarizing a single article), so *all* AI output should be thoroughly checked.
- Rather than using AI to generate original content, consider using it to *help you brainstorm and generate ideas* before writing e.g., use it to help create titles, interview questions, FAQs, outlines, etc.
- *Only use [University Approved Tools](#)* (and only after logging in with SU credentials) when working with, referencing, or feeding in any University data in an AI system. It is important to remember that many AI tools use data or information you enter as part of its training and development, so be cautious about using any sensitive personal information about yourself or anyone else.
- Some other useful AI functions (mostly operational):
 - Proofreading/grammar checker (e.g., Microsoft Word’s Editor, Outlook’s Predictive Text)
 - Condensing/summarizing text (always check to ensure that key points remain and are accurately portrayed).
 - Letters of Recommendation (develop these from native files)
 - Scheduling
 - Creating tables
 - Transcribing/Translating
 - Analyzing spreadsheets and other data
- When using generative AI, learn to develop accurate and useful “prompts”:
 - For instance, you can tell AI what “character” it is to assume, and then you should be as specific as you can about goals, examples, voice, style, focus areas, etc.
 - *E.g., You are a program manager for a public grant-based program at a large research university. You create reports with professional and clear language that are presented both to your supervisors and the general public. For part of one of these reports, examine and analyze these budget data spreadsheets for the past five years to identify trends and anomalies and to suggest how to improve budget management for the next two years.*
- Follow all [Syracuse University Artificial Intelligence Guidelines](#).

3. Be Aware of These Drawbacks

- Never turn off your critical thinking skills, skepticism, or common sense when using AI.

- Remember that some professors are encouraging students to use AI as a smart tool rather than relying on it to write their papers without any human input or review—we should therefore do the same. Also note that current University guidelines allow for the prohibition of AI use by students entirely.
- Remember that working with native content does not necessarily protect you from hallucinations—AI is "just" a prediction engine that guesses content rather than considers it.
- AI systems are designed to be “people pleasers”—to agree with and support the user’s ideas and thoughts. This can lead not only to incorrect input aligning with what it “calculates” you want to receive but also sycophantic and overly deferential behavior.

4. **Recommendation**

Therefore, it is our recommendation that communicators should not:

- Publish predominantly AI-generated content for external audiences.
 - Treat AI content and hand it off as if "someone else" wrote it—it is our work and our responsibility.
 - Forget that LLMs are demonstrated to have "biases, stereotypes, and lack of contextual understanding" ([per Professor Jing Lei](#)).
 - Unconditionally trust AI even when it's used operationally in programs and apps we normally trust (e.g., Office, Adobe, Zoom, etc.)
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Addendum: The AI House of Horrors

Designed to give you a healthy sense of skepticism, not to frighten you off AI entirely ...

- Hallucinations and Other Blunders
 - [AI Is Getting More Powerful, but Its Hallucinations Are Getting Worse](#)
 - [Attorneys baffled by federal judge’s order that lists incorrect parties, wrong quotes](#)
 - [Can researchers stop AI making up citations?](#)
 - [AI Hallucinations in Medicine and Mental Health](#)
 - [Syndicated Content in Sun-Times special section included AI-generated misinformation](#)
 - [Education report calling for ethical AI use contains over 15 fake sources](#)
- People Pleasing and False Information

- [AI Lies Because It's Telling You What It Thinks You Want to Hear](#)
- [Man hospitalized after taking ChatGPT diet advice, study says](#)
- [NYC's AI Chatbot Tells Businesses to Break the Law](#)
- [Musk says Grok chatbot was 'manipulated' into praising Hitler](#)
- Intellectual Property and Copyright
 - [Scientific Journals Can't Keep Up With Flood of Fake Papers](#)
 - [Tech companies accused of scraping millions of copyrighted songs to train AI](#)
 - [Anthropic agrees to pay \\$1.5 billion to settle author class action](#)
 - [Hollywood is fuming over a new 'AI actress'](#)
- AI "Slop" (Low Quality Content)
 - [Spotify Announces New AI Safeguards, Says It's Removed 75 Million 'Spammy' Tracks](#)
 - [YouTube Enables Users To Generate Alternative Endings for Shorts With AI](#)
 - [AI-Generated "Workslop" Is Destroying Productivity](#)
- Energy and Environment
 - [The AI Boom Is Driving Up Electricity Bills](#)
 - [Google drops 'net zero' goal as AI energy use rivals Denmark's annual consumption](#)
 - [AI Data Centers Are Coming for Your Land, Water and Power](#)
 - [Data Center Boom Risks Health of Already Vulnerable Communities](#)
 - [Sam Altman's AI empire will devour as much power as New York City and San Diego combined. Experts say it's 'scary'.](#)
- Miscellaneous Horrors
 - [Meta's AI Rules Have Let Bots Hold 'Sensual' Chats With Kids, Offer False Medical Info](#)
 - [Meta's Unauthorized AI Chatbots Sent Pics Showing Celebs 'Dressed in Lingerie,' Report Says](#)
 - [Generative AI's risks for youth](#)
 - [FTC Launches Investigation into Potential Harms of AI Chatbots](#)
 - [The AI Takeover of Education Is Just Getting Started](#)
 - [AI teacher tools display racial bias when generating student behavior plans, study finds](#)
 - [The Student Brain on AI: A panic over 'brain rot' obscures a more complex—and surprising—reality](#)